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October 15, 1980

Edmund Muskie, Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20520

Mr. Muskie:

As I write this letter, a man is sitting in prison waiting to be executed by hanging. Who is this man?

-He is a Catholic, lay leader in his parish, devout Christian,
-He is a politician, faithfully following the democratic process through his political party and general elections
-He is a martyr, for most of his adult life he has been imprisoned, tortured, slandered, and now sentenced to death for his principles.

His name is Kim Dae Jung. He and 23 others, many of them religious leaders have been tried by a military court, which deliberated for six minutes before sentencing Kim Dae Jung to death.

The Department of State has informed me that they believe that "our fundamental interest in peace and stability in Northeast Asia would best be served in Korea by progress toward constitutional reform and by a more broadly based civilian government supported by the Korean people."

Why then - did U. S. General John Wickham release from his command the troops which were used to brutally put down those protesting in Kwangju on May 22, 1980?

Why then - did the U. S. Export-Import Bank, on May 20, 1980, only three days after the military takeover by General Chun, announce a loan of $200 million to South Korea?

Why then - did the U. S. Ambassador to South Korea attend the coronation of General Chun as President of South Korea?

Why then - on June 4, 1980 did the President of the U. S. Export-Import Bank travel to Seoul to meet with the new Deputy Premier to assure him that the Bank would support 14 projects in South Korea with $631 million?

Why then - did the Asian Wall Street Journal in an interview with the Export-Import President print: "He told Korean officials that the U. S. hopes the military will 'back the good economic planning here, not interfere with it, but back it and help them implement it strongly!'"

Why then - was the delegation of U. S. corporate participants in the U. S.-Korea Economic Council on June 9, 1980 in Seoul the largest ever?

Subsequently, if the Department of State truly adheres to the policy that they have put in writing, I urge the United States to begin action immediately, either partial or fully to:

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a) End military aid and sales.
b) Withhold U. S. Export-Import Bank financing.
c) Vote against World Bank, IMF, and ADB loans and urge U. S. allies to do same.
d) Halt U. S. governmental visits.
e) Withhold PL480 aid.
f) Stop USDA Commodity Credit Corporation loans for U. S. grain purchases.
g) End OPIC insurance.
h) Withdraw U. S. troops from South Korea.
i) Make strong and repeated public condemnation of Chun's actions.
j) Insist on the release of Kim Dae Jung and 25 others arrested unlawfully.

On May 22, 1980 after the military massacre at Kwangju, the Committee for Democratic Struggle of Chosun University issued a statement. In it, they said, "The heart of our nation is broken into pieces, and this is a day of unbearable tragedy." The statement ends with this call, "In order to leave for our next generation a glorious history no longer tainted with oppression and exploitation, we have to drive out "and flog" Chun Doo-hwan and his bandits from our society. Having this task in our hearts, let us rise up together, fight together, and march together, singing our national anthem, as long as we can breathe! LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA! LONG LIVE DEMOCRACY!"

This is obviously not Communist insurrection. It is the embodiment of the will of a people to overcome and surmount oppression, exploitation, and live democratically with each other. The United States, by tacitly approving of General Chun's regime does great harm to democracy, to stability, and to the quality of life in South Korea. Our tacit and economic approval of General Chun's regime, embitters South Koreans to the American people and exposes our true motivations in that region.

In the name of human decency and human dignity, let us not sell our principles for the dollar, nor betray the lives of South Koreans, including Kim Dae Jung by supporting a repressive regime in our own self-interests.

Perhaps Kim Dae Jung is a victim of pre-election politics. Perhaps he is part of a topic that this Administration doesn't want to stir up before November 4th. But may I remind you, that this is a man's life in the balance - and many, many others to come.

I await a more forthright response from the United States to save Kim Dae Jung and to support the popular democratic movement in South Korea.

Sincerely yours,

Nora J. Hallett

Nora J. Hallett
Director, Oregon Fellowship of Reconciliation

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